THE TOUCH OF CHRIST

GRANVILLE MERCER WILLIAMS, S.S.J.E.

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THE TOUCH OF CHRIST

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Lectures on the Christian Sacraments

BY

GRANVILLE MERCER WILLIAMS

S.S.J.E.

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To my Mother

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PREFACE

An apology is necessary for adding still another book to the already large number dealing with the Christian Sacraments and the Christian sacramental principle. The apology is best made by recounting briefly how this little book came into being.

The contents of this book comprise four lectures given at St. Thomas' Church, New York City, during the month of January last under the auspices of the New York Altar Guild. The lectures were not prepared with a view to publication, and it is only because of the insistence and kindness of some of those who heard them that they now appear in book form.

In reading the lectures over I am aware of the painful inadequacy of much of the treatment. But I have thought it better to let them go out practically in the form in which they were delivered, rather than attempt to expand them at the numerous

points when expansion, or at least explanation, is badly required. My obligations to many other writers will become evident as the book is read. It is my hope that this very imperfect treatment of a great subject, may lead those who read these lectures to undertake the study of larger and more adequate books, some of which are referred to in the course of the lectures, and from which I have borrowed freely. I must express especial gratitude to the Rev. Frank Gavin, Professor of the General Theological Seminary, New York, for having generously placed at my disposal, the results of his investigations as to the Jewish antecedents of the Christian Sacraments.

GRANVILLE MERCER WILLIAMS, S.S.J.E.

St. Andrew's House, Brooklyn, N. Y.
March 13, 1928.

CHAPTER I

THE SACRAMENTAL PRINCIPLE

THAT body which rejoices in or is afflicted by the name of "The Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America," is marked off from other bodies which are commonly classed as Protestant by the fact that it is very definitely, and quite incurably, sacramental. If you are inclined to doubt this statement, glance some time when you have nothing else to do at the Church Notices in the columns of one of our daily papers. There you will find, in the case of churches other than those of our own communion, that the great feature of the services on which stress is laid is the sermon,—its subject and the man who is to deliver it. Under the heading "Protestant Episcopal" you will indeed sometimes find the name of the preacher at the different services, less often the subject of the sermon, but the

whole is subordinated to services of liturgical worship in which the sermon plays but a part. You will notice something else. In all of our churches, with but negligible exceptions, you will find advertised at some time on each Sunday, a service which is altogether sacramental in character,—the Holy Communion. You will look in vain for any such announcement in the services of the Protestant bodies, though even here there is a growing tendency to approach to the practice of the Church. If you enter one of our churches and compare its appearance with the ordinary Protestant church the contrast will again be apparent. In the latter, the important feature is the reading desk and pulpit, while the entire building is arranged primarily as an auditorium, emphasizing the central place of the sermon and the preacher. In our own churches you will behold a font, speaking to you of the Sacrament of Baptism, while the most conspicuous feature of the building will be the Altar, the Holy Table for the Holy Mysteries, while altar rails will remind you that there the worshippers will meet their Lord in the great Sacrament of Holy Communion.

It could not be otherwise. The Episcopal Church claims to be one with the Church of all the ages. She did not come into being through any quarrel with Rome, nor through any separation of the American Colonies from the realm of England. The latter separation led to some changes in this American Church of ours, in Prayer Book, in forms of worship, in discipline; but essentially the Church was declared to be, and was intended to be, one with the Mother Church of England. In a similar way the breach which took place between the English Church and the See of Rome brought into being new forms of worship and a modification of discipline, but essentially the Church was intended to be, and was, one with the Ancient Catholic Church of the ages. The Church is proud of her ancient heritage. So the Church must be sacramental, for the simple reason that the historic Church from the beginning has always been sacramental. In the New Testament, the speech of St. Peter on Pentecost is marked, not only by the exhortation to his hearers to repent, but also to be baptized. The one is as important as the other. And

in the "Breaking of the Bread" as practised by the Apostles we see the primitive Eucharist, as important and as essential as the doctrine or the prayers. As Canon Carnegie of Westminster has well said, "Traditional Christianity, Christianity as history portrays it, is fundamentally and essentially a sacramental movement—the gradual unfolding of the principle underlying the fact of the Incarnation, the fact that God Himself became flesh and dwelt among us, that He manifested Himself under the forms of space and time, using the apparatus of the natural world as the implement of His activities and the vehicle of His life-giving power." [1]

If God is to reveal Himself to man and speak to him, it must be in modes and in terms capable of appealing to man as he is. The inward and the outward, the spiritual and the material, the thing signified and the sign, are not, or should not be, put in opposition one to another. They are instead complementary truths, even as a curve is both convex on one side and concave on the other. Man is a creature made up of body and soul, even as a sacrament is an outward and visi-

[1] W. H. Carnegie, "Anglicanism," p. 94.

ble sign of an inward and spiritual grace. It is the tragedy of some religious thought, and a real denial of the basic principle of Christianity, when it is assumed that a thing must necessarily be more spiritual because it is not material. The opposite of spiritual is not material, but non-spiritual. The material gifts of God may be as spiritual as His gifts of grace if they are properly used.

The simple principle underlying sacramentalism, that an inward and spiritual reality can be conveyed through an outward and visible sign, is never doubted in the common walks of life. A man walking along a street meets a lady of his acquaintance. He doffs his hat, thereby expressing recognition and friendship. He expresses also by his action, be it noted, something even more fundamental. He is expressing the general veneration for womanhood and motherhood felt by Christians because the Christian religion has taught that God chose a woman, the Blessed Virgin Mary, for the supreme privilege of becoming the mother of Jesus. All these purely spiritual things are symbolized and set forth in what may seem a pure conven-

tionality. If a man should reason to himself that this means of recognizing a lady may often be merely conventional, that friendship, respect and reverence, the inward and spiritual graces, are more important than any outward acts of recognition; and should he henceforth omit the outward signs, the bow and the smile, he would be judged, and rightly, not a very spiritual man, but a boor. So again, patriotism and love of country are purely spiritual qualities. Yet the patriot who refuses to honor his national flag, or to respond to the thrill which comes to the heart when in a far country he catches a glimpse of the Stars and Stripes, would rightly be regarded with suspicion.

The sacramental principle in our ordinary lives is so far-reaching, that our list of illustrations might be indefinitely prolonged. It is only in relation to religion that anyone has suggested that the same principle has no place. It is somehow thought that to connect the thought of God with material things is degrading to Him. This idea rests upon the profoundly un-Christian belief that matter in itself is evil. Christianity, on the contrary, is bound to the characteristically Jew-

ish premise "that the material world is not evil, but good—since God made it and saw it to be good." [1] And we further believe, as Christians, that "in the Incarnation God found a material human body no unfit vehicle by which to express the Divine," and that in the Incarnation of the Son of God "all of human nature, indissolubly body and soul, was caught up into juxtaposition and intimate union with Deity." [2]

It is a great misfortune that, as a result of a reaction from a one-sided and unethical view of the Sacraments which was too often tolerated in the Mediaeval Church, the modern world has fallen heir to a piece-meal universe. The whole of reality has been split asunder into mutually exclusive halves, which are set in sharp antithesis one to another. It is our contention that the philosophy of an ethical sacramentalism which distinguishes historic Christianity offers the only rational, because the only whole and satisfying, view of the world, of God, and of religion.

[1] Frank Gavin, "The Jewish Antecedents of the Christian Sacraments," p. 23.
[2] Gavin, ibid.

To begin with the world, we find at the present time two diametrically opposed views in the field. These are the purely spiritualistic and the purely materialistic views of the universe. The first may be illustrated from the popular fallacy which goes by the name of Christian Science. It has kinship with certain of the ancient philosophic systems of India, though it is not so consistent and thoroughgoing as these. To it, matter is evil and an illusion. Mind is all. As mind becomes capable of realizing the illusory character of the material world, the "errors" of mortal mind, producing suffering, sickness, and death, will be done away. To undertake to use any "material" remedy for the healing of disease or the alleviation of pain, only encourages "error" and so is to be deprecated. Christian Science is however not so consistent in refusing to use material means for securing warmth or nourishment! But it illustrates the fallacy that "matter" is not of God and evil is non-existent.

At the opposite extreme stands scientific materialism. There are signs that the vogue of this is losing ground among our greater and more thoughtful scientists, but it was

exceedingly popular in the Nineteenth Century. It is the view of the world which is probably really held by the majority of present-day people in the Western world. According to this theory, matter alone is real. All of the universe, so it teaches, can be completely explained by mathematical formulae, and mechanical and chemical laws. God, the soul, and even thought are illusions and superstitions. It is only by giving up our primitive credulity as to the reality of the spiritual that we can hope to make any progress.

Opposed to both of these exclusive views, but mediating between them stands Christian sacramentalism. Holding firmly to the existence of both material and spiritual realities, it claims that the true meaning of the material can only be found as it is transfigured and transformed by the spiritual. It is built upon a basis of solid fact, the immediately experienced relationship in man himself of a material organism and a spiritual self. It sees constantly how the material body reacts on the soul, that sins committed by the body cannot help but stain and pollute the soul, and how the thought of high and holy things may even physically transform

the body. It believes that God, the great Spiritual Reality, has spoken in the past to men by means which were sacramental. It believes that He used the prophets of old, their human bodies, their human tongues to deliver to men a spiritual message. Above all, historic Christianity is forever completely committed to the belief that God has delivered His supreme message to men by sacramental means. For it was not through the inspiration of the prophets, nor by any merely spiritual vision or message, according to Christianity, that God gave to man the great and supreme revelation of Himself. Instead it was through a literal Incarnation, through the taking of a real human body into union with His very Godhood, and through an Atonement involving the giving up of that flesh to be crucified and that human blood to be shed;—it was through these material means, these outward and visible signs, that man has come to the fullest knowledge of God which it is possible for him to have. "The Word was made flesh and tabernacled among us," and "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself," these are the fundamentals of the Christian religion.

These sacramental truths, this sacramental unity knits into one concordant whole the discordant views of the spiritualists and the materialists.

Again we may notice how sacramentalism holds the balance between conflicting views about God Himself. To some, God is wholly transcendent, wholly "other," as contrasted with the world and with man, wholly separate, lifted far above the world and its petty concerns in an inapproachable glory. This was the view of the Deists and Rationalists of the Eighteenth Century,—of Voltaire, and in our own country of Thomas Paine. It is not today a fashionable view of God, but there are not lacking signs that it may again be fashionable tomorrow.

Contrasted with this is the view of God as immanent in nature, as shut up and confined in the universe which is, as it were, His Body. Logically, in this view, there is no reason why we should find God in any particular part of the universe rather than in another. He is as fully manifested in the stock or stone, as in the intellect and life of a Shakespeare, a Darwin, a Socrates, or a Jesus Christ. He is as fully revealed in

the evil as in the good; the death of a martyr exhibits him, but so does an act of lust or a brutal murder. An English writer on mystical subjects has in one of the less fortunate passages in her writings waxed eloquent over the revelation of divinity disclosed in a dilapidated alley cat! Once more we find our Christian sacramentalism coming to the rescue.

We inherit from Judaism the necessary belief in the majesty and transcendence of God. He is the Almighty indeed, exalted far above His creation. Before Him, in the prophet's vision, the seraphim veil their faces with their wings, while they cry one to another, "Holy, Holy, Holy," expressing thus His awful majesty, and purity, and separateness. But He is not shut out from His Creation. He notices the fall of every sparrow. He manifests His presence to His people in sacramental signs given in the Wilderness, the pillar of cloud by day, the pillar of fire by night. He manifests Himself to Moses in the burning bush, and speaks to him through this outward and visible sign. In the Holy of Holies He is thought of as dwelling personally and really with His peo-

ple. And as Christians, we believe that in the sacred humanity of Jesus Christ there dwelt "the fulness of the Godhead bodily." Through the Christian Sacraments, and especially in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar, the Holy Communion, He comes again, we believe, as to a trysting place to visit His people, that under our conditions of time and space we may find and acknowledge Him who nevertheless is present in, and through and above all creation, above all, and through all, and in all, in Whom we live and move and have our being.

Again, in our view of the function of religion in our lives, the sacramental principle reconciles opposing opinions. One view of religion, which has been held in the history of the human race, makes of it a purely corporate, social, or State matter. This was true in the case of the official Roman religion, and is also true to a certain extent in the Shintoism of modern Japan. "If we leave out of account the bizarre phenomenon of Caesar-worship, it is true to say that official 'paganism,' that is, the established religious system or systems with which Christianity found itself confronted when for the first

time it spread beyond the borders of Palestine into Northern Syria, Asia Minor, and Europe, consisted of an immense multitude of localised and mutually independent cults, closely associated for the most part with the life of the State and of its provinces and municipalities. When they did not represent mere survivals of primitive magic and fetichism, these 'established' cults were based on a strictly commercial view of the relation between the gods and their worshippers, the god being bound to protect the State or the municipality in return for a given *quantum* of sacrifices, but otherwise being under no obligation to interest himself in the community or its members. It will be clear that so purely contractual a system did not even pretend to satisfy the deeper needs or aspirations of the individual soul, nor were its ministers conceived to be invested with what we know as 'pastoral' functions. A Roman who was oppressed by the enigma of the universe, by the weight of unmerited misfortune, or by the sense of personal guilt, would no more have thought of applying to the *flamen Dialis* or to the *quindecemviri sacris faciundis* for ghostly aid and comfort than of

confiding in the Prefect of the Praetorian Guards." [1]

At the opposite pole from this is the view of religion seen in some forms of modern Protestantism, which makes it an *exclusively* personal relationship between the individual soul and God, a matter of the salvation of the individual with little or no thought of the corporate or social aspects of religion.

The truly Christian approach to God through sacramental means, is a constant reminder not only of God's care for each of us as individuals, as He gives to each in the Sacraments His gifts of grace and strength; it is also a constant reminder that we receive such gifts only as parts of a great Society, a corporate body. We can only receive the gifts of God as belonging to a Society not limited in its membership to any race, or nation, or political division, a body which transcends all such artificial divisions on earth, and stretches even beyond the earth to include all who have gone before us, and all who will come after us, angels, and archangels, and all the company of Heaven,—

[1] N. P. Williams, "Essays Catholic and Critical," pp. 385, 386.

in short the Holy Catholic Church of Christ. Our acceptance and use of the Sacraments, shows that we share in the life of the body, and reminds us that blessings received from God require of us duties towards our neighbor. The life of Christ mediated to us through the Sacraments is shared by all the members of the body, and we are saved not purely as individuals but as members of the great family of God. The corporate and individualist views of religion thus find their balanced expression in the doctrine of the Communion of Saints.

CHAPTER II

THE CHRISTIAN SACRAMENTS

ENOUGH has been said, we trust, in the first chapter of this book to show that Christian sacramentalism offers the key to a balanced, satisfying, and rational view of the universe, of God, and of religion. But it is not sufficient for us to put forward merely a general justification of sacramentalism. It remains to show why we value and employ certain signs and acts rather than others to show forth and to mediate to us the grace of God. It is not only sacramentalism, but the Christian Sacraments that must be accounted for.

The answer can be concisely put. We use certain outward signs and words and actions, and account these Sacraments rather than other signs and words and actions which we might choose and employ, because we believe that the particular Sacraments of the Christian Church gain their power and effective-

ness through the Holy Will of God, historically revealed to us by Christ—either directly or through His Church. The Prayer Book Catechism defines a Sacrament not only as "an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace," but as such an outward sign of an inward grace as has been ordained by Christ Himself. The Christian Sacraments are such because they have their origin in their institution by Christ as recorded in the pages of the New Testament. It is the conviction that God through Christ has set them forth, which makes it possible for them to be, not symbols merely, stirring up in us an aesthetic or emotional reaction,—as for instance the sight of our flag may do—; but what we may term effectual symbols, truly and really conveying to us the grace or thing symbolized, as a United States one dollar note really conveys the dollar to its owner. The note is an effectual symbol of the dollar because there stands behind it the intention and will of the Government of the United States that it shall indeed be such. The Christian Sacraments are effectual symbols of God's grace because God has set them forth for us, because we use them in obedience to

His Will, and because He wills to give to those who so use them the graces which He has attached to their use.

To refer again to the Church Catechism, the Christian Sacraments "are the means whereby we receive" grace, and "a pledge to assure us thereof." The rites revived or evolved by Dr. Guthrie at St. Mark's-in-the-Bouwerie, rites of Holy Fire or Holy Water, or revivals of other rites, Greek, Egyptian, American Indian or what not, are in a certain sense no doubt sacramental, but they are not and cannot be Christian Sacraments for the simple reason that we have no assurance that the Will of God as shown through Christ and His Church has set forth any such rites, or that He has promised to bestow grace upon those who use them. They are symbols merely, perhaps beautiful, suggestive, or inspiring, but mere symbols and not, like the Christian Sacraments, effectual symbols.

It is because we believe that the Christian Sacraments have behind them the Divine authorization that we are able to refute the accusation, so often made, that Christian sacramental belief is in its essence magi-

cal. "We are overwhelmed today," writes Dr. Gavin in his recent lectures on "The Jewish Antecedents of the Christian Sacraments," "by a steady and consistent stream of propaganda which would induce or coerce us to recognize in all utilizations of the material for religious, ceremonial, or ritual ends, the existence and presence of magic and superstition. This type of argument is plausible and apparently convincing until we delve into definitions in an attempt to clear the issue. . . .

"How shall we define *magic*? We may not deem it sufficient to describe it as a utilization of a formula, rite or ceremony in order to produce phenomena utterly incommensurate and surpassing the power of the cause. The heart of the matter lies still deeper, for it concerns the aim and purpose of the use of the formula we should call 'magical.' For example, the story of Aladdin and the genii is a tale of pure magic. What is the essential factor in the case? Is it not the power possessed and exercised by Aladdin of coercing forces, ordinarily outside the range of his control, by means of the technique called 'magical' to do his will? In each instance of

what may be alleged to be magic this fundamental characteristic maintains: the person in possession of the magical secret can impose his will on others, without reference to their desires. The broadly defined type of primitive religion that can be called magical presents the same characteristic: the person employing the proper method can disarm the hostility or opposition of a supernatural power, even of the Deity, and coerce it to do his will. As the salient quality of magic we may then state that it consists in the imposition of the will of the person possessing the secret on that of another, whether human or other-than-human, by the use of some formula or rite having this coercive power." [1]

The Christian Sacraments and Christian sacramental theology even in the fully developed form which the latter has assumed in the official teaching of the Roman Catholic Church, do not in any way come under the category of the magical. "The sacraments have their sole excuse for being in what is deemed to be explicit divine injunctions for their institution and continuance. So there is

[1] Gavin, op. cit., pp. 19, 20.

certainly no advantage taken of Deity, nor any imposition of human will on His—but the precise reverse: all that is done is done because it is believed to be His Will that is being carried out."[1] Nor can it be maintained that as regards the recipient of the Sacraments, the Christian doctrine is magical. In this case the analogy of our dollar bill fails completely. The person who gains possession of the dollar bill is credited with the dollar in money, whether he has earned it honestly, merely found it by accident, or stolen it. On the other hand the sacramental benefits are received only by those who in faith and love make their approach to God in these appointed ways. Thus a person who should seek sacramental Absolution from a priest merely that his conscience may be temporarily unburdened in order that he may the more freely sin again, does not at all receive Divine forgiveness through the Sacrament, rather he stains his soul with the the awful guilt of sacrilege. The response of the will of the recipient, so far as he is capable of this, is in every case necessary in order that the benefits of the Sacraments

[1] Gavin, ibid.

may be received. Long ago, St. Paul reminded the Corinthians of this fact. "Wherefore whosoever shall eat the bread or drink the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man prove himself, and so let him eat of the bread, and drink of the cup. For he that eateth and drinketh, eateth and drinketh judgment unto himself, if he discern not the body." [1] It is this ethical insistence that forever frees the Christian doctrine of the Sacraments from any element of magic or superstition.

The Sacraments then are Divine means of grace because God has made them such. But we do not believe them to be the *only* means of grace. God can and does give grace to the soul by other means than by Sacraments. Every prayer, every aspiration of the soul towards God, every act of love towards the brethren, is followed, we believe, by the outflowing of Divine grace into the soul. "Draw nigh to God and He will draw nigh to you" is a principle of universal application whether the means of drawing nigh be Sacraments or something else. It is a principle

[1] I Cor. xi, 27–29.

which is asserted again and again by theologians that "God is not bound by His Sacraments." There are many devout people today who through no fault of their own do not know and do not value the Sacraments. To them, we may well believe, God will supply His grace in other ways. But to him who has come to appreciate the sacramental principle as it is revealed in the supreme Sacrament of the Incarnation and Atonement of Jesus Christ, and in the sacramental system of the Church, the Sacraments are in a special sense, *the* means of grace, for they are the means appointed by a loving Father to which the obedient wills of His children must rise in joyous response of grateful love.

There remains to be considered the historical objections to Christian sacramentalism. As has already been pointed out, a ground of our repudiation of the charge that Sacraments are magical or superstitious lies in our belief that they are ordained for our use by God Himself. In the case of at least the two great Sacraments of Holy Baptism and Holy Communion it has been the almost universal Christian belief, until very re-

cently, that these were intimately connected with our Lord; in that He expressly commanded them to be observed and used by His followers. "Those who are acquainted with the present position of the minute critical and historical investigations, which have been for the last century and still are being carried out with reference to the origins of Catholic Christianity, will not need to be reminded . . . that the connection of the Sacraments with the historical Jesus is precisely one of the matters which are most hotly disputed." [1] To discuss this problem in detail would require a large volume, but it may be well briefly to summarize the problem and to give some hints as to its probable solution. "It is generally admitted," writes Canon Quick of Carlisle in his recent book on "The Christian Sacraments," "that the actual command to baptize, contained in Matthew xxviii, 19" [i. e. "*Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit*"] does not belong to the most primitive and authentic record of our Lord's sayings; and, although the

[1] N. P. Williams: "Essays Catholic and Critical," p. 378.

direct evidence for His institution of the Eucharist is much stronger, yet the different accounts of what was said and done at the Last Supper vary considerably from one another, and differences of interpretation are still possible, even when the facts have been agreed upon. On the other hand, our documents seem to warrant the assertion that Baptism, the Laying on of Hands, and the Breaking of the Bread were practised from the earliest times in the Christian community; and it is a natural inference that these ceremonies had had some authority given them in the precept or example of the Master Himself."

". . . It may, however, be well to state at once, as a general conclusion from the historical controversies of the last half-century, that we are no longer justified in resting the whole, or even the main weight of the authority for the doctrine and practice of any sacrament upon the bare fact that the Bible attributes a particular form of words to Christ Himself." [1]

The considerations advanced by those who

[1] Quick, "The Christian Sacraments," pp, 118, 119.

do not believe that our Lord intended to institute the Sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist, or indeed any Sacraments, may be summarized as follows:

(1) The actual command to baptize in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost as given in the Matthean Gospel presupposes a developed doctrine of the Trinity which is without parallel elsewhere in the New Testament. Further this so-called baptismal formula is in conflict with the actual practice of Baptism in the Apostolic Church as described in the Book of Acts where Baptism is stated to be given "In the Name of the Lord Jesus."[1] For these reasons the command is supposed to be a reflection of a custom prevailing at the time the Gospel was written, rather than representing words uttered by the Lord Jesus Himself. It should be added that modern scholars are practically in agreement that the Matthean Gospel in the form in which it now stands was not written by the Apostle Matthew, and therefore the passage cannot be taken as the account of an eye-witness of the event.

[1] Cf: Acts ii, 38; viii, 16; x, 48.

(2) The crucial words in connection with the Eucharist, "This do in remembrance of me," though occurring in the account of the Institution of the Eucharist given by St. Paul in his First Epistle to the Corinthians,[1] are found elsewhere in the New Testament only in the Gospel of St. Luke.[2] And in certain manuscripts of this Gospel, these words are lacking. It is held by many critics therefore that our Lord did not pronounce these words, nor did He intend that His actions at the Last Supper should be repeated.

(3) It is further believed by many scholars that our Lord supposed (with the Apostolic Christians) that His return to the earth in glory would take place within a comparatively short time. "This generation shall not pass away till all be fulfilled." [3] In such a case there would be no need for a Sacrament which was to be a continual remembrance of Him.

(4) Many scholars would admit that there did exist in the early Apostolic Church, *a* Baptism derived from the ceremonial

[1] I Cor. xi, 24, 25.
[2] Luke xxii, 19.
[3] Cf: Matt. xxiv, 34; Mark xiii, 30; Luke xxi, 32.

washing administered to Jewish proselytes who were admitted to a certain share in the Jewish religion. And the "Breaking of Bread" referred to in the Book of Acts,[1] was the Jewish *Kiddush* "or sanctification of the Sabbath or of a great feast by the blessing of bread and wine on its eve, a ceremony which Jesus had in the circle of His friends and hearers occasionally invested with the additional significance of a ritual rehearsal of the 'Messianic banquet,' which on the last evening of His life He had employed as an acted parable of His imminent death, and which His followers continued to observe at their club-meal or *Agape,* from habit or feeling rather than from any reasoned theory, as a commemoration or reminder to themselves both of His death and of His future return. For the first few years of Christianity, therefore, these observances were no more than harmless pieces of sentimental symbolism, with no specifically 'sacramental' significance."[2] Indeed, neither the proselyte Baptism, nor the "Breaking of Bread" *could* have been sac-

[1] Cf: Acts ii, 42, 46; xx, 7.
[2] N. P. Williams, "Essays Catholic and Critical," p. 384.

ramental, since what we now term "sacramental conceptions," were entirely foreign and unknown to Judaism.

(5) The transformation of these empty symbols into Christian Sacraments full of awful power and mystery was due mainly to the influence and work of the Apostle Paul. Desiring to commend the new faith to the pagan Gentile world he allowed these harmless rites to be interpreted by his converts, and, indeed himself interpreted them, as Sacraments, outward and visible signs of an inward and spiritual grace. These novel ideas and teachings of Saint Paul were borrowed by him from non-Christian sources. The teachings of the so-called "Mystery Religions," represented by the cults of Dionysius, of Isis and Osiris, of Mithras and of others, were boldly adopted by "Paulinized" Christianity. "The basal human need which these Mysteries, all alike, claimed to satisfy was the craving of the sick soul for 'salvation.' The 'failure of nerve,' which afflicted great masses of the population during the first century of our era, the widespread pessimism and world-weariness which supervened upon the close of the Roman civil wars, appeared

in the consciousness of the individual as a nameless and oppressive fear—a fear of the universe, of the ruthless power of Fate, of the malefic influence of the stars, of annihilation at death, of the torments of Tartarus. It was from this fear that the 'Mystery Religions' promised deliverance, bestowed by a philanthropic 'Lord' or 'Saviour,' who himself had known the anguish of death, or at least of poignant sorrow or laborious toil, and who, as it is alleged, promised to transfuse the virtue of his own divine life into the soul of his votary, assuring the latter thereby of pardon, inward peace, and a blessed immortality, through rites of a sacramental character. As the chief needs of the religious soul are purity and inward strength, it was natural, indeed inevitable, that these rites should have taken the form of a cleansing bath and of a sacred meal." [1] The similarity of the alleged teachings of these "Mystery Religions" to Catholic theology should be noted. Thus "pagan sacramentalism" passed into Christianity.

It is scarcely too much to say that if all

[1] N. P. Williams: "Essays Catholic and Critical," pp. 387, 388.

the allegations of this skillfully woven hypothesis be true, Christianity as a historic religion has received a severe if not a mortal wound. The critics of Catholic sacramentalism would explain by this hypothesis not only the origin of the Christian Sacraments, but the rise of the belief in the Deity of Jesus Christ Himself. For the origin of the latter belief they find also in alleged similar ideas occurring in the Mystery Religions. It has been the strength and glory of Christianity that it claims to rest upon historic facts. But upon the hypothesis outlined, the Christian religion from almost the start has gone sadly off the track. A Jewish prophet has been elevated into an incarnation of Deity, an identification which according to these critics, would have astonished no one more than Jesus Himself. It may be well to add, however, that the Catholic Christian suffers far less, even if the hypothesis outlined be true, than does the Protestant. For the Catholic, believing very definitely in the Church and in God's promise to guide His Church into all truth, might well admit that even such an unpromising field as the "Mystery Religions" might furnish treasures of truth

for the development of Christian doctrine. The Protestant, assuming the truth of this hypothesis, might take refuge in Unitarianism, though it would seem to be more rational not to believe in God at all, if the message of Him Who was at least the greatest of the prophets, was allowed so soon to be misunderstood and to remain for nineteen centuries uncorrected.

Neither Catholic nor Protestant, however, seems likely to have to adopt any such expedients. There are not wanting signs that the theory outlined as to the origin of Catholic Christianity "has reached the zenith of its popularity and may shortly enter upon a period of decline." [1] In fact it rests upon a number of unlikely and unprovable assumptions. To the factors which militate against the acceptance of the "Mystery-Religions" hypothesis, we must now turn our attention.

(1) The fact that the form of the Matthean command to baptize gives evidence of a later developed Trinitarian theology does not, of course, prove that our Lord gave *no* command to baptize. On the contrary, the

[1] N. P. Williams "Essays Catholic and Critical," footnote, p. 392.

use of Baptism in the early Apostolic Church is presumptive that such a command was, in fact, given. The account of the baptism of Jesus by John occupies a prominent place in the Gospels and is connected with the illapse of the Spirit. It seems not unlikely that our Lord's human experiences at this time would naturally tend to associate the gift of the Spirit with Baptism by water, and possibly led to the use of Baptism by the disciples of Jesus, even during our Lord's lifetime.[1] If so, the circumstances of its origin would make it entirely sacramental, an outward sign of the inward gift of the Spirit.

(2) The Apostle Paul in giving his account of the Last Supper with the words, "Do this in remembrance of me," most probably refers to teaching which he had "received," not as is sometimes supposed directly from the Lord in a vision; but from his own instructors in the Christian faith, the followers and friends of Jesus. Even if the words, "Do this in remembrance of me," do not occur in the Gospels, it may well be that the early Christian Church felt less need

[1] Cf: John iv, 1, 2.

to record the fact of our Lord's commanding the observance of the Eucharist, when in fact they were observing it, either in response to His explicit command or to other indications, which He had given at its institution, that it was to be repeated.

(3) The question as to the limits of our Lord's human knowledge as to the time of His return is a most difficult one. Some of His sayings would indicate that He looked forward to a long period elapsing before this took place, and it is not fair altogether to overlook these. Thus in the same chapters in the Synoptic Gospels which contain the saying about "this generation" not passing away "until all be fulfilled," there are other sayings which indicate a much longer period before the Second Coming.[1] It is possible that the solution of these contradictions lies in the confusion by the Evangelists of prophecies relating to the destruction of Jerusalem which actually took place within "that generation" and other words of our Lord which referred to His return in glory. In any case it is hazardous to insist that He

[1] Matt. xxiv, 6, 14, 36; Mark xiii, 7, 8, 10, 32; Luke xxi, 9.

looked forward to an immediate return.

(4) If it is admitted, as it usually is, that *a* Baptism and *a* Eucharist were observed by the earliest Christians it is surely arbitrary to assume that these were "mere empty symbols" and therefore non-sacramental. As a matter of fact the sharp distinction between "inner" and "outer," "thing signified" and "sign," "matter" and "spirit" is comparatively modern, and had no place in the Judaism in which Christianity took its rise. In the lectures delivered last Summer in London, and but recently published, Dr. Gavin of the General Theological Seminary has shown that sacramentalism, far from being alien to and absent from Jewish thought, was an essential part of Judaism. "Rudimentary sacramentalism, or at any rate the essential and germinal factors in sacramentalism, not only existed but flourished as an *essential* part in Judaism. . . . We may feel assured that there is nothing inherently improbable or impossible in the hypothesis that Christian sacramentalism was Jewish in origin." [1] The main conclusions

[1] Frank Gavin: "The Jewish Antecedents of the Christian Sacraments," p. vi.

of his lectures are in accord with the views of eminent Jewish scholars.

(5) In the light of this fact, the "Mystery-Religion" hypothesis for the origins of the Christian Sacraments, being quite unnecessary falls to the ground. Incidentally, Dr. Rawlinson's recent Bampton Lectures on the "Christology of the New Testament," show that the "Mystery Religions" are unnecessary to explain the emergence of Catholic Christology, which also derives largely from Jewish ideas. No doubt the "Mystery-Religion" theory will now rapidly decline in popularity. Besides being superfluous it contains a psychological impossibility. I quote the Rev. N. P. Williams:[1]—"Consider for a moment the implications of this supposition. It compels us to suppose that, within a comparatively short space of time, St. Paul's Asian and Hellenic converts unconsciously infected their master and father in Christ with what was, on the hypothesis which we are considering, a profoundly un-Christian point of view; and that this mental infection was so thorough-going, that the Apostle, whilst still at the zenith of his in-

[1] "Essays Catholic and Critical," pp. 398, 399.

tellectual and spiritual powers, and still enjoying an unimpaired memory of his past life, came to believe—in diametrical opposition to the truth—that he had 'received from the Lord,' through the Mother Church of Jerusalem, and had always taught to his disciples, traditions and ideas which in fact he had unwittingly imbibed from them. It necessitates the ascription to him of an incredible degree either of simplicity or of carelessness, in order to account for the alleged fact that—whilst engaged in a campaign against those pagan cults which, in his bitterest moments, he regards, like Justin Martyr, as the work of demons and which in a more tolerant mood, he dismisses contemptuously as the worships of 'many (so-called) Kyrioi'—he should have unsuspectingly allowed the texture of his devotion and his thought to become saturated by conceptions borrowed from those very 'Mysteries' which it was the object of his mission to destroy. If this be incredible, and yet the 'Mystery' hypothesis be retained, it can only be on the supposition that St. Paul was dominated by the desire to attract converts at any price, even the price of truth. Only if

one or the other of these suppositions be accepted—only if we assume that the most heroic of evangelists may pervert his message for the sake of a cheap success, or that the most vigorous of thinkers may so befog himself by self-hypnosis as to lose grip on the realities of his own past life—shall we think it a probable explanation of the genesis of Catholic sacramentalism that 'St. Paul, though ready to fight to the death against the Judaising of Christianity, was willing to take the first step, and a long one, towards the paganizing of it.'

"And only if we attribute a hardly believable blindness to the primitive nucleus of Jewish-Christians, can we suppose—as the 'Mystery' theory would compel us to suppose—that, whilst attacking St. Paul with unmeasured ferocity for his liberalism in regard to the imposition of the Law upon Gentile converts, the Judaising faction should nevertheless have acquiesced, with inexplicable placidity, in his far-reaching contamination of the faith of Israel with Gentile ideas of a *Kyrios* and of 'sacraments.' "

The Catholic belief that sacramental Christianity, as we know it, owes its origin

to the will of Jesus Christ is far more satisfactory intellectually as the "Mystery religion" hypothesis. And in any case we would think it more rational to believe that the course of the development of Christian thought was in accordance with the will of God, and the desires of Jesus Christ, than that His message was misunderstood and perverted from almost the very beginning until the ingenious researches of modern scholars discovered that Christianity was in fact, entirely un-Christian!

CHAPTER III

THE NUMBER OF THE SACRAMENTS

THERE has been a great deal of fruitless and unmeaning controversy over the question of the number of the Sacraments. The controversy is and must be fruitless for the simple reason that our answer to the question will be dependent upon our definition of a Sacrament. Thus if we define a Sacrament in its broadest sense, merely as "an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace," then it is evident that our list of Sacraments will number not two, nor seven, nor even seventy, but an almost infinite number. A spoken prayer, an uplifted hand in blessing, an act of kindness to another, any ceremony or part of a ceremony which is intended to symbolize a spiritual reality, becomes a Sacrament. As a matter of fact, as late as the time of St. Augustine (4th Century) or even later, the word "sac-

rament" was used in this very general way and consequently the number of the Christian Sacraments was indefinite. Gradually, however, the influence of the scholastic theologians brought about that the Catholic Church in the West came to reckon as *the* Sacraments par excellence:—Baptism, Confirmation, Penance, Holy Communion, Matrimony, Orders and Unction, thus making up the mystic number seven. The Eastern Orthodox Churches also, though separated from the West since the eleventh century, came to designate as Sacraments the same seven rites. Even if we make our definition of a Sacrament hinge, as it should, upon the Divine institution of the rite, these seven rites, all having some foundation in the pages of the New Testament, can properly be so described.

The reaction at the time of the Protestant Reformation led the Continental Reformers, as a rule, to reject as Sacraments all of these rites excepting only Baptism and the Lord's Supper. If the procedure of isolating seven rites as Sacraments be regarded as arbitrary, it should be noted that the claim that there are two—and only two—

Sacraments is equally arbitrary. As a matter of fact, Protestant thought had but little use for the Sacraments—even the two retained—as it did not feel at home with the sacramental philosophy lying behind them. In much Protestant thought the outward and the inward, the material and the spiritual, were often set in sharp opposition one to the other. The old Jewish and Christian idea that for us men the material is the usual vehicle of the spiritual, was lost. Baptism and the Eucharist were retained merely because the New Testament seemed to declare so plainly that Christ Himself commanded them. But even these two Sacraments remained as an awkward appendage to Protestantism. Later the Quakers logically rejected Sacraments altogether, and the recent theories which we have outlined which derive the Sacraments from Pagan Mystery Religions may owe part of their popularity to the fact that they are thought to furnish a thorough-going Protestant with a rational reason for abolishing even those two Sacraments thought to be founded by Christ.

Our own Church—as represented by the Church of England—did not escape alto-

gether from the effects of the Protestant revolt. If it be true, as it is, that our Church does not teach in explicit terms that there are two Sacraments only, neither does she teach in explicit terms that there are seven. Many Episcopalians are of the firm opinion that the Church *does* teach that there are but two Sacraments. They remember learning in their childhood in the Church Catechism the question "How many Sacraments has Christ ordained in his Church?" and the reply "Two only." Of course the reply is not "Two only," but "Two only as generally necessary to salvation," which is quite a different thing. No one has ever suggested, for example, or thought of suggesting, that Matrimony or Orders is "generally necessary to salvation," that unless a man or woman be married or ordained he cannot be saved! It is undoubtedly true that here the Church Catechism was purposely framed so as to *seem* to be Protestant, while, in reality, it leaves room for a Catholic interpretation. This procedure, which is characteristic of Anglican formularies, may not seem to us a very honest or even decent method of teaching religion, but, unfortunately, it was the

method which the peculiar conditions of that time in England made necessary. In the same way, the twenty-fifth Article of Religion *"Of the Sacraments,"* very carefully avoids saying that "Confirmation, Penance, Orders, Matrimony and Extreme Unction" are not Sacraments, though it speaks of them somewhat disparagingly as "being such as have grown, partly of the corrupt following of the Apostles, partly as states of life allowed in the Scriptures," neither description being applicable to the Sacrament of Confirmation. In practice, the Anglican Church after the Reformation continued to use and value all the seven rites which were commonly designated Sacraments in the Mediaeval Church. The Sacrament of Holy Unction, however, since the Church failed to set forth any authoritative form for its use after the First Prayer Book of 1549, unfortunately fell into neglect until very recently. It is now happily being revived amongst us.

CHAPTER IV

THE SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION

In the Apostolic Church, as the Rev. N. P. Williams has pointed out, the three Sacraments now known as Penance, Baptism, and Confirmation originally formed one single "Sacrament of Initiation" by which the convert was cleansed from his sins, born anew into God's family, and strengthened by the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. The connection of the three stages of the rite is clearly indicated in the words ascribed to St. Peter after his sermon on the Day of Pentecost:—"Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." [1] The words show us the close connection in the Apostolic Church at the time the account was written of the three elements of: (1) repentance

[1] Acts ii, 38.

with some explicit renunciation of sins, (2) forgiveness and regeneration wrought by baptism and (3) the reception of the indwelling Holy Ghost. Elsewhere in Acts[1] the "receiving of the Holy Ghost" is expressly connected with prayer and the laying on of the Apostles' hands after Baptism. Confession of sins as a preliminary to Baptism was apparently usual in the case of the procedure of John the Baptist [Matthew iii, 6, "And (they) were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins"]. And we read elsewhere in Acts,[2] "And many that believed came, and confessed, and showed their deeds." In both these instances the confession of sin spoken of is unquestionably an open and public confessing of wrongdoing.

This single "Rite of Initiation"—repentance, forgiveness, and the reception of the Holy Spirit,—developed in course of time into the three separate Sacraments known as Penance, Baptism and Confirmation. This development was partly due to the introduction of the practice of Infant Baptism of which we have no explicit mention in the

[1] Chapter viii.
[2] Acts xix, 18.

New Testament. The Sacrament of Confirmation represents the conclusion of the ancient rite of initiation "cut off and made into a separate Sacrament," and in the West postponed until the child has arrived at "years of discretion" in order that at least part of the process by which admission is gained to full membership in the Church of Christ, may be experienced under conditions of full consciousness and intelligent responsibility. In the Eastern Churches, "Chrismatisation," or the anointing with oil which corresponds to our Western Confirmation, is still administered to infants directly after Baptism. Penance again, was separated from the single "Rite of Initiation" and made into a separate Sacrament in order that forgiveness of sins committed after Baptism might be assured. When Baptism was administered only to adults as the crown and seal of a conscious conversion of the will to God, the Sacrament of Penance—a "second plank after shipwreck" as it has been termed—was less necessary than is now the case when Baptism is adminstered in unconscious infancy.

In the present use of the Church, Penance is the Sacrament by which the assurance of

forgiveness of sins committed after Baptism is secured. Its Biblical basis is found in the words ascribed to our Lord in the twentieth Chapter of St. John's Gospel (words which are used by the Bishop in the normal Ordination of Priests in our own Church): Jesus "breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whosesoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosesoever sins ye retain they are retained." The claim made by our Lord as the representative of God, to forgive sins was called blasphemous by His enemies during His life time. In the case of the story of the healing of the paralytic,[1] the whole point of the narrative lies in the new claim that God has given this power of declaring forgiveness in His Name unto men. "When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee. But there were certain of the scribes sitting there and reasoning in their hearts, Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God only? And immediately when Jesus perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, he

[1] Matt. ix, 1–8; Mark ii, 1–12; Luke v, 17–26.

said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts? Whether it is easier to say to the sick of the palsy, thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins (he saith to the sick of the palsy), I say unto thee, Arise," etc.[1]

This power to pronounce authoritative forgiveness in God's name claimed and possessed by Jesus, He explicitly transmitted to His Church through His disciples in the words already quoted from the Johannine Gospel.

The method by which this power has been exercised in the Church has varied from age to age. At first it was probably employed only in connection with the Sacrament of Baptism, when, after some preliminary act of renunciation and confession of sins, the neophyte received remission of sins as well as a new birth unto righteousness in the waters of Baptism itself. The tendency to postpone Baptism until practically the end of life, an illustration of which may be seen in the case of the Emperor Constantine, for

[1] Mark ii, 5–9.

fear of falling into sin afterwards, seems to show that originally the power of forgiveness possessed by the Church was thus strictly limited to the "Sacrament of Initiation." The same limitation is indicated by the words of the Epistle to the Hebrews "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance." [1]

It has already been suggested that the custom of Infant Baptism was one of the causes which led the Church to recede from this stringent position and to provide, in the Sacrament of Penance, "a second plank after shipwreck" in the case of sins committed after Baptism. Another cause for the growth of Penance as a separate Sacrament is found in the effects of the persecutions upon the growing Church. Before terrors of death or torture, some baptized Christians gave way and renounced the faith, or burnt incense to the emperor. Could they be forgiven? The

[1] Hebrews vi, 4–6.

older and sterner view said "*No.*" But a milder view, which ultimately gained complete acceptance, and which we may believe was more in accordance with the teachings of our Lord, held that it was possible and desirable that such offenders should be assured of Divine forgiveness upon repentance. Thus Penance as a separate Sacrament came into use. Originally there was generally required a long preliminary period of penitential exercises, after which the penitent was allowed to come before the Christian assembly and make a public confession of his wrongdoing, whereupon he was absolved by the Bishop, and readmitted to communion with the Faithful.

The practice of private Confession to a priest, which later came to be the almost universal method by which the Church exercised its prerogatives of Divine forgiveness, appears to have arisen originally in the huge monastic institutions of the Irish Church. There Confession was used, not only by "open and notorious evil livers," but by those who were striving to be saints. Lesser faults, as well as grave ones, were submitted to the Father Confessor, that true contrition

might be encouraged, and the sense of sin deepened, and that advice, encouragement, and absolution might be received. This private, or "auricular Confession," as it is sometimes called, is now in general use not only in the West, but in the Eastern Churches as well. The practice was explicitly retained by the Church of England at the Reformation, and in the Office for the Visitation of the Sick in the English Book of Common Prayer there is given a form of Absolution which is that generally used by priests hearing Confessions in our own communion. One of the longer Exhortations in the Communion Office in the Book of Common Prayer bids all whose consciences are troubled to avail themselves of the privileges of the Sacrament of Penance. An increasing number do so year by year to their great and endless comfort.

The Sacrament of Holy Baptism is properly regarded as the gateway into the Christian Church. The words ascribed to our Lord in the Fourth Gospel during his conversation with Nicodemus, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the

Kingdom of God," [1] proclaim it such. Modern criticism regards this Gospel as a pious meditation upon the meaning of the Person of Jesus, rather than a purely historical account of His life and ministry; but even granting that these actual words were not spoken by Jesus, at least they reveal the importance attached to the Sacrament of Baptism, early in the history of the Spirit-guided Church. We have already given reaons for believing that in spite of the opinion of some critics, our Lord did, in fact, institute this Sacrament.

In St. Paul's teaching on the Sacrament, in his Epistles we note two distinct functions of Baptism, namely, in the words of the Church Catechism, that it is both "a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness." The "new birth unto righteousness" requires as its completion the gift of the Holy Spirit, conceived originally as given through the concluding rite of laying on of hands. If we should go on to reason from this that only through Confirmation can there come to the soul the first gift of the indwelling Spirit, it is plain that the present prac-

[1] John iii, 5.

tice followed both by the Roman Catholic and by our own Church, of placing Confirmation a dozen years or so after Baptism, cannot be justified. Some Anglican theologians frankly accept this position, and would have us revert to the more primitive practice (still used in the Eastern Churches), of having Baptism, even of infants, followed immediately by Confirmation.

On the other hand, the official teaching of our Church as given in the Church Catechism, is in entire agreement with the teaching of the Church of Rome as expressed by St. Thomas Aquinas and other Scholastic theologians. According to this teaching, "Confirmation is not a necessary Sacrament in at all the same sense as Baptism, it confers further graces of the Spirit, especially for growth and stability in the Christian life, and for boldness to confess Christ and 'fight manfully under His banner,' but nothing other in kind or in essential principle from what Baptism has already given." [1]

It is in the conception of the Sacrament of Holy Baptism as the means not only of

[1] Quick: "The Christian Sacraments," p. 182.

the forgiveness of sins, but also as the new birth unto righteousness through the coming of the presence of the Holy Spirit, that we must look for the solution of a difficult problem in connection with the almost universal custom of Infant Baptism now prevalent in the Church. Our justification for this practice must rest primarily not in any difficult and abstract theory of the remission of a guilt of "Original Sin" in the infant, but rather in the belief that Baptism marks the child as a "member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the Kingdom of heaven."

The Augustinian doctrine of "Original Sin" has behind it a profound truth,—the observed fact that mankind is indeed "fallen," that there is a rift in the lute, that there is a tendency to do the evil from which the nobler part of us shrinks,—in short, that it is easier for us to be bad than to be good. As we give way to this tendency of our nature, and commit "actual sins," the sense of guilt and the need of Divine forgiveness and absolution is borne upon us. But to conclude, as St. Augustine concluded, that this very tendency towards evil, for which we per-

sonally are not responsible, in itself brings condemnation from God, and that all unbaptized infants are therefore condemned to the torments of hell, and that the baptism of infants has for its principal purpose deliverance from a "wrath of God," resting on them because of this Original Sin, such a conception is neither rational nor decent, nor is it, thank God, Scriptural, Christian, nor Catholic. It is not upon considerations such as these that we should base our custom of Infant Baptism, but rather upon the words of Jesus, "Suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not for of such is the Kingdom of heaven." [1]

In case of necessity, any person may and should administer the Sacrament of Holy Baptism. Water should be poured thrice on the flesh of the person to be baptized, preferably on the head, accompanied by the words "I baptize thee, in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost."

As we have seen, frequent references in the Book of Acts to baptism in "The Name of the Lord Jesus," suggests that the use of

[1] Matt. xix. 14.

the three-fold formula of Baptism is not strictly primitive. Indeed it seems probable that Baptism originally was unaccompanied by any form of words, Baptism "in the Name of the Lord Jesus" meaning merely that the person baptized confessed his faith in Jesus as Lord. In this connection, the account of the Baptism of the Ethiopian eunuch by Philip "the deacon" is instructive:—"And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." [1] In the same way, the three-fold formula of Baptism probably represents a later requirement of faith in the Holy Trinity on the part of the candidate for the Sacrament. It is well known that the so-called Apostles' Creed is mainly the old Roman baptismal Creed, representing a still further development in the faith required of the neophyte. But granting all this, it is evident that it would be most presumptuous and unjustifiable for an individual to set aside or

[1] Acts viii, 36, 37.

neglect the long tradition of the Spirit-guided Church, that the words accompanying Baptism, "I baptize thee, in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost," form a necessary part of the rite.

The Sacrament of Confirmation has been touched upon already in our treatment of Holy Baptism, and but a word or two further is required. Since it imparts the Holy Spirit for the strengthening of the Christian soul in its warfare against evil, it is well not to delay it too long. Children can profitably be confirmed at a much younger age than is generally customary in the Episcopal Church, for if they acquire the habit of the use of the Sacraments of Penance or Confession and Holy Communion before the stress of adolescence is upon them, it is a great help to them in meeting the difficult problems of life. And although there is much to be said for the administration of the Sacrament of the Holy Spirit directly after Baptism, our Western practice of deferring Confirmation has its advantages. I can remember that the distinguished Serbian Ecclesiastic, Bishop Nicolai Velimirovitch, on his visit to America some years ago, spoke of our custom

of deferring Confirmation until the child had come to years of discretion, as one of the usages in which the Western Church seemed to have the advantage of his own Eastern Communion.

The outward and visible sign of this Sacrament, is not fixed as is the sign in Holy Baptism. The Anglican Church bases its practice on the usage described in the Acts of the Apostles [1] and employs the laying on of the hands of a Bishop. The Roman Catholic Church combines the touch of the Episcopal hand with an anointing with oil, while in the Eastern Churches the Sacrament is known as Chrismatisation, and consists of an anointing with oil blessed by a bishop, but usually administered by the Parish Priest.

[1] viii, 17.

CHAPTER V

THE HOLY EUCHARIST

We are baptized but once, but again and again we come in Holy Communion to receive the very gift of God Himself in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. It is not due to any depreciation of Baptism, it is not due to any lack of veneration for the august Sacrament whereby we are made members of Christ, children of God and inheritors of the Kingdom of heaven, that Christians feel and know that in the Holy Eucharist we achieve and experience a growing knowledge of the wonder and beauty of Christ's presence, "different from that which is found in any other sacrament." [1]

The bitter controversies which have centered both about the Sacrament of the Altar and the nature of the Sacramental presence we may hope and pray are passing away, as

[1] Quick: "The Christian Sacraments," p. 187.

men of good will seek to "taste and see how gracious the Lord is," rather than justify some purely arbitrary view of how and when God should give to men His gifts of grace. It is in a spirit of reverent awe and love that we should approach this subject, in the same spirit which surrounded that last sad meal, when Jesus looking forward to His shameful death on the Cross instituted what He termed the New Covenant; and took the bread, and gave thanks and break it, declaring it to be His Body, and took the cup and gave thanks, and gave it to them, declaring it to be His Blood.

In considering Holy Communion, I should like to begin by setting before you words from two different sources which are not what we might expect *a priori*.

The first are the words of the Roman Catholic Lorenzo Scupoli, taken from his wonderful book, The Spiritual Combat, written in 1589 and approved by many generations of great Catholic theologians and saints. Scupoli accepted, it need hardly be said, all the official Roman teaching in regard to the Eucharist, yet when he came to expound the value of Spiritual Communion,

that is to say Communion accomplished by an act of love and longing apart from any reception of sacramental Communion at all, he could write: "Spiritual Communion may be even more advantageous to us and acceptable to God than many Sacramental Communions, when the latter are received with imperfect disposition. As often then as you shall dispose yourself and prepare for spiritual Communion, you will find the Son of God ready to give Himself with His own Hands to you for your spiritual food."

And then on the other side, I should like to report some words uttered at the Lausanne Conference of 1927 by Pastor Wilfred Monod, Honorary President of the National Union of Reformed Churches in France. Here is a man who stands poles apart from Catholic tradition, yet hear him speak!—"Huguenot by tradition, brought up in the Reformed Church of France, a disciple of Calvin, of Zwingli, even in the actual domain of the spirit of George Fox, unfaltering in my filial devotion to them, I grow, nevertheless, more sensible of the value of the Sacrament. . . .

"The Aspects of the Holy Supper are innumerable. All the summits of the Christian faith are reflected in the Sacrament as a circle of mountains in an Alpine lake. In the region of mystery it finds the highest mystical faith. It nourishes the social ideal of the prophet. Lastly, in the moral sphere, it furnishes a constant call to the pardon of sin, to purity, to courage, to the spirit of sacrifice. It exercises a firm discipline on thought and conduct. Revival meetings and sermons of awakening will become less important in any parish where the flesh and blood of the Holy Sacrament circulate silently from family to family and from soul to soul." [1]

The Eucharist has its roots and its origin in the words and actions of Jesus in the Upper Room on the last night before his betrayal and death. We have considered and rejected reasons which some scholars advance for divorcing the Sacrament from Jesus, and making it a mere heathen importation into Christianity. Taking its roots

[1] Quoted by Sir Henry Lunn in "The Review of the Churches," vol. iv, pp. 509, 510.

in the Jewish *Berakha,* the "blessing" or rather thanksgiving to God which was uttered in Jewish households before partaking of any food, connected with the sacrifice on Calvary by the inherent symbolism of the broken bread and outpoured wine and the words by which our Lord identified it with the New Covenant which was to displace the ancient sacrifices of the Jewish religion, it developed in meaning and significance as Christians came in time to recognize the meaning and significance of Him who had instituted it, even Jesus Christ. Judaism and Jesus are a sufficient explanation of the Eucharist.[1] By this act Jesus himself invested His coming death with that redemptive and sacrificial significance, which was fully to be realized by His followers only after He had passed into the heavens. "This is my body which is broken for you." "This cup is the new covenant in my blood." "This is my blood of the covenant which is poured out for many." It was an acted parable, pregnant with meaning. It gave the key to the

[1] Frank Gavin: "The Jewish Antecedents of the Christian Sacraments," pp. 113, 114.

tragedy of the morrow. It transformed a sordid execution into a sacrifice for sin. It pointed to the glory of the Cross.

And it was no mere empty symbol. It was intended to be, as it became, a means whereby the followers of Jesus through the ages could re-present to themselves and before God, that "full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world." The Eucharist is preeminently *the* Christian Sacrifice. As early as the end of the First Century the prophecy of Malachi, which foretold that among the Gentiles "in every place incense and a pure oblation should be offered," [1] was applied to the Christian Eucharist. The mystical, sacramental, but real identification made by Jesus Himself between the gifts and creatures of bread and wine and the broken Body and outpoured Blood of Calvary, caused the Christian at the Eucharist to be mystically present at Calvary itself.

"The Cross of Christ on Calvary, which was to the Jews an offence and to the Gentiles foolishness, shines out before the eyes of the faithful. 'As often as ye eat of this

[1] Malachi, I, 11.

bread and drink of this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.' (I Cor. xi, 26) This 'showing' is not merely a praising and glorifying in words, but a dramatic setting forth and rendering present of the sacrifice of Calvary. Yea more, it is a partaking in that suffering and that crucifixion. The Pauline passion-mysticism is not confined to the individual experience of the Christian, but has its place also in the cultus. Ignatius of Antioch (c 110 A. D.) gives unambiguous testimony to the cultural passion-mysticism of early Christianity. He sees, set up in the Eucharist, . . . an altar of sacrifice; there takes place for him . . . a real sharing of the suffering and dying of Christ. It was from this cross-and-passion mysticism associated with the Eucharist that Christians drew the strength to endure cruel martyrdom. To die the martyr death is nothing less than to drink 'the cup of the Lord,' to become, 'the pure bread of Christ.' Even as the eucharistic celebration is an inward and mystical dying with Christ, so, conversely, a real dying for Christ is the celebration of a eucharistic sacrifice." [1]

[1] Friedrich Heiler, "The Spirit of Worship," p. 33, 34.

This profound evaluation of the meaning of the eucharistic sacrifice in the Early Church from the pen of the distinguished Lutheran theologian, Frederich Heiler, offers us a guide to a true grasp of this mystery. The primary significance of the eucharistic sacrifice lies precisely in its identification with Calvary, an identification suggested by our Lord's own words, a dramatic showing-forth of the Lord's death. But for the benefits of that sacrifice to reach us, for the sacrifice to be effective for us, there must come with the pleading of that sacrifice an offering of "ourselves, our souls and bodies," a readiness to recognize the call to take up the Cross, a desire to give ourselves and not to spare, a willingness to lay down, if need be, even our lives for Christ's sake. It is this double aspect of the sacrifice, the pleading and re-presentation of Calvary, and the offering of ourselves along with and because of this, that forever prevents the genuine Catholic doctrine of the Sacrifice of the Mass from being superstitious, or capable in any sense of being termed a "blasphemous fable" or a "dangerous deceit."

As Jesus Himself was responsible for the

belief among Christians of the reality of the eucharistic Sacrifice, so too it was the words of our Lord which are responsible for the belief in the Real Presence of Jesus in the Holy Sacrament of the Altar. It was He who took the bread and wine and said, "This is my body," "This is my blood." The faith of Christians has discovered and knows that those words are very truth.

"Word made Flesh, by word he maketh
Very bread his Flesh to be,
Man in wine Christ's blood partaketh:
And if senses fail to see,
Faith alone the true heart maketh
To behold the mystery." [1]

For the presence is a mystery. It is not a material presence, it is a spiritual presence. It is not vouchsafed to the senses, it is manifested to the believing heart. It is not the less real because it is spiritual. We may apply to the presence of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist, the words which the Apostle Paul uses in another connection, "We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things

[1] St. Thomas Aquinas.

which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal." [1]

Already before any of the Gospels were written, St. Paul had reminded his converts that the cup of the Eucharist is "a partaking of the blood of Christ," and the bread of the Eucharist is "a partaking of the body of Christ," that to eat or drink unworthily is to be "guilty of the body and blood" and that he who eats and drinks "without discerning the body," "eats and drinks judgment." [2] St. Ignatius of Antioch at the end of the first decade of the Second Century describes the Eucharist as "the flesh of our Saviour Jesus Christ, which suffered on behalf of our sins, which the Father in his goodness raised." [3] St. Justin Martyr, writing at Rome about the year 150, tells us that the Christians of his time have been taught to regard the Holy Sacrament as "both the flesh and the blood of the Jesus who was made flesh." [4] These words and others like them, for quotations might be multiplied, and above all the words

[1] II Cor., iv, 18.
[2] I Cor. xi.
[3] To the Smyrneans, vii, 1.
[4] First Apology, lxvi, 2.

used by our Lord Himself are the charter of our belief that the bread and wine of the Eucharist do indeed become, as He declared them to be, His Body and His Blood.

To go further, and enter into a detailed examination of various later theories as to *how* our Lord thus comes to be in His Sacrament would take us too far afield and cannot be attempted. There are theories of "virtualism," "consubstantiation," "transvaluation," "transmutation," "transubstantiation," and many more. Of these, perhaps it might be well to speak briefly only of the latter, since it is the official teaching of the Church of Rome and the term has also been accepted by the Orthodox Churches of the East. The principal objection to the use of the term "transubstantiation" in my opinion, is that it suggests to the average hearer the very doctrine of the Real Presence which it does not teach. For *substance* to most of us means stuff,—matter. We say that a thing has "not much substance," we mean it lacks stuff. So when we are told that the doctrine of transubstantiation teaches "that the whole substance of the bread and wine is transformed into the substance of the Body and

Blood of Christ," we seem to be dealing with a gross and carnal idea of the Presence of Christ in the Sacrament, an idea which easily gives rise to "many superstitions." It was this carnal idea of the presence of Christ in the Holy Sacrament, which gave birth to many repulsive stories of mediaeval "miracles" of bleeding hosts and other similar manifestations, which can and ought to have nothing to do with the presence of the glorified Christ in His Sacrament.

But we ought also to remember that the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches in using the term "transubstantiation" do not intend to teach any such erroneous views. The substance of the bread and wine which becomes the body and blood of Christ, is "substance" in the terms of the Aristotelian logic; it is the altogether intangible and basic reality lying behind all the outward and tangible and material "accidents" manifested to our senses. "It is entirely clear," writes the cautious Anglican, Canon Quick of Carlisle, "That . . . Anglican objections [to a doctrine of transubstantiation] . . . do not hold against the strict theory of Transsubstantiation elaborated by the school-

men, perfected by St. Thomas Aquinas, and made by the Council of Trent the basis of the official teaching of the Roman Church. For in this theory it is made abundantly clear (1) that the Body and Blood of Christ are not present in the Sacrament, either as in any way occupying space, or according to their proper and natural mode of being; and (2) that the consecrated elements do truly retain every reality of bread and wine which it is possible for any bodily sense to perceive, and that therefore the appearance of bread and wine are in no sense illusory or deceitful." [1] Both charity and truth require that, whatever our own opinions, we should recognize that no Christian Church today teaches any but a presence of Christ in the Sacrament which is truly real *because* truly spiritual.

It is sometimes urged against those of us who believe in the reality of Jesus' presence with His people in the Holy Sacrament that such a belief has a harmful effect in causing us to forget His presence elsewhere in His universe, and especially His abiding presence in our hearts. The only possible answer to

[1] Quick: "The Christian Sacraments," p. 250.

this is to assert as strongly as we can that indeed it is not so.

"When men shall say to thee: Lo! Christ is here,
When men shall say to thee: Lo! Christ is there,
Believe them: yea and this—then art thou seer
When all thy crying clear
Is but: Lo here! lo there!—ah me, lo everywhere!"

The author of those lines was a man who believed mightily in the Blessed Sacrament, the author of those lines was a man who valued greatly the precious truth of the Real Presence of Jesus in His Sacrament, the author of those lines was a Roman Catholic—Francis Thompson!

It is because of the Real Presence of Jesus, because of the mystic Sacrifice of Jesus in the Eucharist, that the devout soul finds the consummation of her eucharistic joys in receiving the Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ. Holy Communion is first of all communion with one another, it is the Sacrament of Brotherhood. Christians may still

be outwardly divided, it may not be, and is not yet possible for all of us to partake of the Sacred Gifts at a common earthly altar, but as we receive the Sacrament we are lifted in our partaking from earth to heaven, we pass to the altar on high, and are joined to all the great family of God, to all the Holy ones gone before us, to all faithful Christians in every corner of the world. It is John Keble who sings:—

"No distance breaks the tie of blood.
Brothers are brothers evermore,
Nor wrath nor wrong of deadliest mood
That magic may o'erpower.
Oft, ere the common source be known
The Kindred drops will claim their own
And throbbing pulses silently
Move heart towards heart by sympathy.
So is it with true Christian hearts;
The mutual share in Jesus' blood
An everlasting bond imparts
Of holiest brotherhood.

It is the Sacrament of Brotherhood, but it is also the very gift of God Himself. It is *Jesus* Who comes to us in all His might and power and love and tenderness. Some-

times we may sensibly feel and know His coming. Sometimes all will be dark, the path thorny, His presence as it were hid from our spiritual eyes. Yet still we come and will continue to come to this Divine trysting place, for *He* has told us that He will meet us there, and His Word is true.

"Author of life divine,
Who hast a table spread,
Furnished with mystic Wine
And everlasting Bread.
Preserve the life thyself hast given,
And feed and train us up for heaven,

Our needy souls sustain
With fresh supplies of love,
Till all thy life we gain,
And all thy fulness prove,
And, strengthened by thy perfect grace,
Behold, without a veil, thy face.'"

(*Charles Wesley*)

CHAPTER VI

HOLY ORDERS

In the famous passage in the First Epistle to the Corinthians where St. Paul likens the Christian Church to the Body of Christ,[1] he presses the argument that just *because* those who believe in Christ do make up this mystical body, therefore they cannot all exercise the same functions. The very unity of the body is secured by the diversity of the functions and powers and "gifts" of its different members. There must be eyes, hands, feet, ears and all the other necessary parts. The feet must not desire to see, nor the eyes to walk. Yet all are, in their proper stations and offices, necessary nay indispensable in order that the body may function properly. And having developed this thought, St. Paul concludes with a series of rhetorical questions, "Are all apostles? Are

[1] Chapter xii.

all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? Have all gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret?"—The answer to all these questions is obviously not *"yes,"* but *"no."*

It is just as obvious in human society as in the human body, that diversion of functions, powers and responsibilities is necessary if society is to go on at all. The more civilized the society, the greater this differentiation of function. The postman, the baker, the butcher, the cook, the publisher, the plumber and the policeman are all essential to our modern life, but the functions of these different offices are seldom if ever exercised by the same person.

Again, in an army there must be one commanding officer, with subordinate officers under him, and again privates. It would scarcely lead to order or efficiency if all the members of the army were commanding generals. But the importance of the general does not mean that the private is of no account. Both are essential to the conduct of war and to the well-being of the organization. This universal principle of differentiation and subordination of function is mani-

fested in the Christian Church by the various orders of sacred ministers, each with its special functions and duties, differentiated in turn from the order of the laity. The graded ministry of the Church with its Bishops, Priests and Deacons is but the development within the mystical Body of Christ, of a principle the validity of which is elsewhere universally admitted.

At the time of the Protestant Reformation, in an excessive reaction from a too exclusive insistence upon the rights and privileges of the ecclesiastical hierarchy with the Pope at its head, there was a tendency to repudiate in theory this common-sense differentiation between the functions of different members of the Christian Church. The "priesthood of the laity" was so insisted upon as to make it appear that any special order of Priests, Bishops, or Deacons with special functions within the Christian body, was a violation of Christian liberty and spiritual freedom. In practice, however, Protestant bodies felt the necessity of setting up some sort of a ministry which should be responsible for such things as the conduct of public worship,

preaching, and the regulation of Church discipline. And a new conception of the ministry, in which the powers and functions of the office came to be thought of as acknowledged by the congregation in virtue of the personal abilities and qualifications of the minister, rather than because of powers and gifts received from the great head of the Church, Jesus Christ, resulted frequently in producing in the new ministry an absolutism worse than that from which the Protestants were seeking to escape. It was but too true, both as to the derivation of the words and the actual working out of the system, that "New presbyter was but old priest writ large."

It is far from the thought of true Catholicism to deny the real priesthood of the laity. Those who are ordained to the holy offices of Bishop, Priest, or Deacon are conceived of as exercising their functions only because of and through their connection with the whole body of the Church and its Head, Christ Jesus. Just as the Presence of Jesus in Holy Communion is a special pledge and symbol of His universal presence in the Church, just as the Sacrament of Holy Baptism is a special pledge and symbol of the

universal fact that all men are God's children, so the Holy Orders of the Christian Church are a special pledge and symbol of the universal priesthood of all believers. And just as we do not cease especially to value the presence of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, though indeed He is everywhere; just as we do not cease especially to value the real adoption as a child of God effected through Holy Baptism, though all men are God's children; so we will not cease especially to value and cherish the ancient ministry of the Catholic Church, though in a sense all believers constitute a "royal priesthood" unto God. A word which is intended to be disagreeable and really is question-begging has been hurled at those of us who value the Catholic ministry. We are called "sacerdotalists." "If it be sacerdotalism," writes Canon T. A. Lacey, "to say that the priesthood of Christ, operating in the priesthood of the Church is the appointed means of salvation, we are sacerdotalists. If sacerdotalism means a denial of any other divine operation, sacerdotalists we are not." [1]

In the appointing and ordaining of the

[1] "The Anglo-Catholic Faith, p. 137.

Twelve Apostles our Lord laid the foundation for what was to develop into the ministry of the Christian Church. Dr. Gavin of the General Theological Seminary, assures us that ordination of pupils of a Rabbi by laying on of hands was common in contemporary Judaism. He thus describes the ordination of "elders" (*Zekenim*) as employed by Judaism during the first Christian Century. "Three men laid hands upon the ordinand, and the official function thus given was two-fold: the authentic exposition of the Law, and the judicial function of pronouncing judgment. What was done in ordination was the transmission of the spirit by the ordainer to the ordinand, in strict succession from Moses and mediated by the intervening generations. Had not R. Judah ben Baba been willing to forego his life rather than break the succession, the official discipline of Israel—*i.e.* the authoritative administration of the Law—would have been forfeited." [1]

These conclusions of Dr. Gavin's seem to me to be of the utmost importance in any

[1] Unpublished article. Kindly put at my disposal by Dr. Gavin.

discussion of the conception of the Christian ministry. It has been too readily assumed that the doctrine of Apostolic Succession, that is to say, the belief that the powers and functions of the Apostles, in turn derived from Christ Himself, are transmitted to succeeding generations by the Sacrament of Ordination through the laying on of the hands of a Bishop, the representative and successor of the Apostles, is a late importation into Christianity and without primitive warrant. But if Dr. Gavin be correct, this conception must go back to the very beginnings of Christianity, for it is in turn derived from Judaism. The idea of the transmission of spiritual powers and functions through the laying on of hands, declared to be a Catholic or even an Anglican invention, was undoubtedly familiar to our Lord and His earliest disciples.

We read in the Book of Acts that Paul and Barnabas during missionary journeys "ordained elders in every city" [1] and it seems altogether probable, in view of current Jewish belief, that this *ordination* was what we should call truly sacramental in character,

[1] Acts xiv, 23.

the laying on of hands being thought of as accompanied by the gift of the Spirit for the purpose of the office conferred, with power in turn to transmit this gift of the Spirit to others.

"It is evident unto all men, diligently reading Holy Scripture and ancient authors, that from the Apostles' time there have been these Orders of Ministers in Christ's Church;—Bishops, Priests, and Deacons." So declares the Preface to the Ordinal in the Book of Common Prayer. As regards Holy Scripture, the evidence as to the three-fold ministry is somewhat confusing. The terms Apostle (*apostolos*), Bishop (*episcopos*) Elder, Presbyter or Priest (*presbuteros*) and Deacon (*diakonos*) all occur within the pages of the New Testament, but in particular the terms "Bishop" (*episcopos*) and "Presbyter" (*presbuteros*) seem sometimes to be not clearly differentiated.

A clear example of this lack of differentiation is found in the 20th chapter of Acts when at Miletus St. Paul calls to him from Ephesus the elders (*presbuterous*) of the Church.[1] He addresses them, and in the

[1] Vs. 17.

course of his address speaks as follows:[1]—"Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit hath made you *bishops* (*episcopous*), to feed the Church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood." St. Paul summons to him the *"elders"* of the Church whom he later addresses as *"bishops."*

Again in the opening of the Epistle to the Philippians, St. Paul writes "to all the saints that are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons." Here there is no mention of the "elders" or "priests," and there is apparently more than one bishop. It seems probable, therefore, that the words "bishop" and "elder" were in New Testament times synonymous, and the so-called monarchial episcopate in which a local bishop was in charge of a number of priests had not yet developed. The stages of this development are somewhat obscure, but as early as the first decade of the second century the letters of St. Ignatius of Antioch bear clear witness to the existence of the three-fold ministry with the so-called "monarchial" bishop at its head, which was thereafter universal

[1] Vs. 28.

in the Christian Church until with the Protestant Reformation, the ancient conception of Holy Orders, and with it, the office of bishop was abolished in some quarters.

The references of St. Ignatius in his letters to the three-fold ministry and his insistence upon its necessity are striking and emphatic. One of the most famous occurs in his Epistle to the Smyrneans:—"See that ye all follow the bishop, even as Jesus Christ does the Father, and the presbytery as ye would the Apostles; and reverence the deacons, as being the institution of God. Let no man do anything connected with the Church without the bishop. Let that be deemed a valid (or proper) Eucharist, which is administered either by the bishop, or by one to whom he has entrusted it. Wherever the bishop shall appear, there let the multitude of the people also be; even as, wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic Church. It is not lawful without the bishop either to baptize or to celebrate a love-feast; but whatsoever he shall approve of, that is also pleasing to God, so that

everything that is done may be secure and valid." [1]

In view of much such evidence as this from the second Christian Century and later, and in view of the evidence that a belief extremely similar to the sacramental view of Holy Orders, and of transmission of the Spirit through a succession of laying on of hands existed in the Judaism of the time of our Lord, we may be more than thankful that the Anglican Church preserved the three-fold ministry unimpaired at the time of the Reformation. And, be it said in all charity and love, it is idle to suppose that the Anglican Church will ever abandon her insistence upon episcopal ordination as a necessary part of ordination to the ministry, in order to secure reunion with any Christian bodies which have rejected it.

It is the official teaching of our Church, whatever may be the views of individuals, that episcopacy is, as Ignatius declared it to be, necessary for the very existence of the Church. And whatever obscurity may still surround the origins of the three-fold min-

[1] Chapter viii.

istry, the custom of the Church from the earliest times in insisting upon episcopal ordination as necessary to the validity of the Holy Orders conferred, having been brought about by Divine guidance as we believe, cannot be treated as of no importance. As the Prayer Book declares, "no man shall be accounted or taken to be a lawful Bishop, Priest or Deacon, in this Church, or suffered to execute any of the said Functions except he . . . hath had Episcopal Consecration or Ordination."

It is with our conception of the "validity" of Holy Orders or of other Sacraments that the pious Protestant has difficulty. "It is not yet widely enough recognized," writes Canon Quick, [1] "how distinctive of Catholic thought is its conception of *validity*. This notion of validity arises from the belief that we have sacramental reality not merely when something outward is the expression and instrument of some inward and spiritual good, but also, and in a special sense, when some particular outward thing has been specially appointed by Divine authority to be the expression and instrument of some inward and

[1] "The Christian Sacraments," p. 127.

spiritual good, so that, when the appointed sign is performed, the spiritual good is embodied and conveyed through it. It is in the appointedness of its outward element that the official or ritual sacrament differs from what may perhaps be called a 'natural' sacrament, *i. e.* the sacramental reality which exists wherever the Divine Spirit uses either the material world or human action to be the expression and instrument of His goodness. Thus we have a 'natural' sacrament in every beauty of nature and of art and in every act of human love. But the external element in such sacraments is not in any special sense appointed or authorized or fixed. We do not admire a sunset, a landscape, because we think that Providence has decreed that this one particular combination of form and color should be beautiful; nor do we reverence the heroism of a man who plunges into a dangerous current to save another from drowning, because we believe that the same authority has attached a special value to the act of jumping into deep and rapidly moving water. These things are undoubtedly true Sacraments, since in them the divine goodness uses outward means of

expression and action towards man; but, inasmuch as their outward element is not fixed by appointment, the question of validity does not arise in regard to them. In the same way no question of validity can be asked in regard to the supreme and single Sacrament of the life of Jesus. We may ask pertinently whether He is in fact and in power the Incarnate God, but to ask whether he is so validly would be to talk nonsense.

"But when we believe that our Lord, whether by His own lips in the flesh or through the operation of the Holy Spirit in the Church, has appointed a certain use of water and bread and wine to be the means of His gracious action and self-expression toward man, then immediately the question of validity becomes real and relevant. 'Is the sacrament valid?' we ask: and that is equivalent of asking, 'Has the appointed outward sign been duly performed?' If so, the sacrament must, because of the divine authority appointing it, be a real sacrament. If not, either the sacrament has not been celebrated at all, or else it has been performed in a manner so gravely defective as to render its reality doubtful. 'Valid' therefore, is a term

applied to a sacrament of which the divinely appointed sign has been duly performed, and to which therefore is necessarily attached the divinely promised gift."

For us, "valid" ordination is episcopal ordination. Likewise the validity—the assurance, that is, that we have the Divine gift because of conformity with the Divine appointment—in the case of all the other Sacraments, save alone Holy Baptism and possibly Matrimony, is dependent upon our assurance of the validity of the ordination of the minister who performs it. And that is why we insist so strongly upon episcopal ordination. We do not deny or doubt that God may and does give His gifts and graces through other ministries or even without the intervention of any minister to those who through no fault of their own and acting in good faith strive to draw near to Him. But that does not and cannot minimize *for us* the importance and necessity of the divinely-ordained three-fold ministry of Bishops, Priests and Deacons as it exists among us and in other parts of the Catholic Church.

CHAPTER VII

HOLY MATRIMONY

In a recent book written by a man who does not believe in the permanency and indissolubility of marriage as taught by the Church, the author, referring to the fact that our teaching on matrimony is based upon words ascribed to our Lord in reply to a question on the subject, makes the bold assertion that he does not believe that Jesus taught any such thing. Jesus, he explains, was in constant revolt against the traditionalism of His time. He disregarded the Sabbath restrictions of the Jews, teaching that the "Sabbath was for man, and not man for the Sabbath." His disciples who were traditionalists, were always misunderstanding Him and misinterpreting Him as the record bears witness. And it is likely, so this writer tells us, that in the matter of His teaching about marriage His disciples, as usual, misunder-

stood him, and perverted his "freer" doctrine by their own narrow and traditional views which they attributed to Him. This is truly an ingenious method of transforming white into black, but there is probably no place in the New Testament where it is less applicable than it is here.

The views on marriage, and divorce, enunciated by our Lord in the New Testament, far from being the traditional views of His time, are, in fact in diametrical opposition to them. The Mosaic Law—the traditional Law—allowed divorce, the only question was under what conditions it was lawful for a man to put away his wife. Our Lord flatly breaks with this tradition and declares that divorce cannot be tolerated. Dr. Rawlinson in his excellent Commentary on St. Mark's Gospel has some striking remarks about this. "There was no point," he writes, [1] "at which Christian morality contrasted more sharply with the standards tolerated in the Graeco-Roman world than with respect to the ideal of permanent monogamic marriage. Christian converts at Rome were the more in need of instruction with regard to this matter,

[1] "The Gospel according to St. Mark," p. 133.

inasmuch as the subject was one in which the teaching of Jesus transcended the moral standards even of the Old Testament, which (in the LXX version) formed as yet the only sacred Scriptures of the Church, and the question whether it was in any circumstance legitimate for a Christian to take advantage of the Mosaic toleration of divorce must have been at the time when the Gospel was written a living issue—as indeed, by reason of the 'hardness of men's hearts,' it still appears, in a certain sense, to be."

It may be well to transcribe the account of this matter, as given in the Markan Gospel, in full:—[1]

"And there came unto him Pharisees, and asked him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife?, trying him. And he answered and said unto them, What did Moses command you? And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away. But Jesus said unto them, For your hardness of heart he wrote you this commandment. But from the beginning of the creation, male and female made he

[1] Chapter x.

them. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh: so that they are no more two; but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."

Our Lord's teaching is so radical and so unexpected that his disciples are scarcely able to believe their own ears. They are uncertain about it and question Him further. In the words of the Gospel:—

"And in the house the disciples asked him again of this matter. And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her; and if she herself shall put away her husband, and marry another, she committeth adultery."

On the basis of this distinctive teaching as to the indissolubility of marriage, the Apostle Paul likens the marriage bond to the relationship between Christ and His Church [1] a comparison which permits no thought of an abandonment of the relation-

[1] Ephesians v, 31, 32.

ship through divorce and the undertaking of a new union.

This high ideal of the marriage relationship, which according to our Lord's teaching is the ideal intended by God in all human marriage, is what lifts Holy Matrimony from the level of a mere matter of convenience or of legal contract into the status and dignity of a true Sacrament. There is imparted to Christian believers entering upon the married state, an inward and spiritual grace which enables them to live together, for their mutual help and comfort, to procreate and rear children in the fear of the Lord, and to bear and forbear with one another, thus fulfilling the Apostolic precept, "bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ." [1] That the ideal is a high and difficult one goes without saying, but so is the whole moral ideal of the Christian life. But we cannot doubt that He who laid down the ideal will also supply the grace and power to realize the ideal. It is to Christ that men and women who come together in the Holy Estate of Matrimony must look to supply what is needed. Just as at Cana

[1] Gal. vi, 2.

He turned the water into wine, so He can and will redeem from any sordid motives or lower human conceptions the relationship between Christian men and women who look to Him and trust Him.

It is not the Christian ideal of marriage which is at fault so much as the fact that many people who enter into matrimony are not truly Christians. The ideal must remain unrealizable for those who do not really accept the Christian religion, the implications of Christian marriage as sacramental, and the saving power of Jesus. In the last century, many men who rejected Christian beliefs and Christian theology, honestly thought that they could still retain the system of Christian morals as their ideal, though the basis on which those morals rested had disappeared. But today it is painfully evident that rejection of the Christian faith means also the disappearance of Christian morals. It is our tragedy that many people who have no intention of entering into the sort of union set forth by our Lord, and who do not really believe in His supernatural transforming power, are nevertheless married by Christian priests

and ministers and take upon their lips with the invocation of the Holy Trinity vows and promises, the gravity of which they do not realize, and which oftentimes they have no intention of keeping. And the Church is reproached because it will not permit men and women who have been divorced, to take again with new partners the same vows which they have already broken, and thus doubly perjure themselves in the sight of Almighty God.

A great deal of confusion about marriage would and could be avoided if the fact were frankly faced that perhaps the majority of the population today is really Pagan, not Christian, and that many who are Christians in name do not really accept Christ as the guide of their lives. Such persons may and should be married, not by a priest of the Church, but by a secular official under such conditions as they please, or the Law allows, and we should not criticize them. But for Christians the conception of marriage laid down by our Lord, indissoluble, sacramental, supernatural, must remain the only possible ideal. Should we reject this as impossible or impracticable, it could only mean

that for us Jesus Christ could no longer be regarded as the supreme moral teacher, or as the Incarnate Son of God.

Doubtless there are cases, special cases, in which charity and justice alike proclaim that a separation between husband and wife is the only possible solution. The Church has always permitted divorce of this kind, but such separation does not carry with it any permission to remarry while the husband or wife is still living. In the normal marriage there are children to be considered besides the husband and wife. The value of permanent monogamy here appears in a very practical form. It is significant that many of those who are loudest in advocating a general abandonment of the Christian view of marriage are firm in their declaration that a man and woman who have children should not be allowed to have a divorce. Here the Church is more tolerant than the "reformers," for it may sometimes happen that separation between husband and wife may be necessary for the welfare of the children themselves.

Of late there has been much agitation for a type of marriage, the so-called "compan-

ionate marriage," in which the man and wife live together with the understanding that there shall be no children, and where the propagation of children is frustrated by contraceptive methods. Here again, we ought clearly to recognize that, provided the State should legalize such so-called marriages, they are not and cannot be Holy Matrimony. They may be legalized by the State but they never can be solemnized or blessed by the Church. The primary and natural purpose of marriage is the "procreation of children, to be brought up in the fear and nurture of the Lord, and to the praise of his holy name," as the English Prayer Book has it. This is not its only purpose. It is also "ordained for the mutual society, help, and comfort, that the one ought to have of the other, both in prosperity and adversity." But it is "not by any to be enterprised, nor taken in hand, unadvisedly, lightly, or wantonly, to satisfy men's carnal lusts and appetites, like brute beasts that have no understanding; but reverently, discreetly, advisedly, soberly, and in the fear of God." [1] Into the subject of so-called "birth control" we cannot fully go.

[1] English Book of Common Prayer.

It is not an easy problem. There appears to be much difference of opinion even among medical men as to its effects, and a great authority on the subject declared recently to a group of clergy that there was not yet sufficient evidence in hand to be able to make any definite pronouncement even as to its physiological effects. The wild statements of those who seem to regard "birth control" as a cure-all are often in sharp opposition to the opinions of those who have scientifically studied the matter. Granted that there may be special cases when "birth control" may be morally legitimate or advisable, it is clear that an agreement between husband and wife that there are to be no children, is a mockery of Holy Matrimony.

For if marriage is a Sacrament it must be marked with the sign of a Sacrament, the sign of the Cross. Baptism brings with it its promise to "renounce the devil, and all his works," and "manfully to fight under Christ's banner." It is marked with the Cross. Confirmation brings the Holy Spirit for strengthening the believer in his struggle with sin. It is marked with the Cross. Holy Communion, displaying to us the very

symbols of the Passion, calls upon us to offer ourselves, our souls, and bodies. It is marked with the Cross. Penance too brings its tears of sorrow, its purpose to amend, the resolve to take up the Cross. Holy Order is a call to the ordinand in vows most exacting in character to bear the burdens of the Cross. All these have their joys, it is true, but it is the joy that comes of bearing the Cross of Christ.

The Sacrament of Holy Matrimony does not differ from these. It is not a call to self-indulgence, to a life from which every care, anxiety and responsibility is removed. It too calls to the Cross, to self-sacrifice, to self-control. It reminds those who enter into it that they take their husbands or wives "for better *or* for worse, for richer *or* for poorer, in sickness *or* in health, to love and to cherish till death" parts them. It is an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace. That grace is that wonderful thing, —true love. It is to be a love higher than any mere passion, though sexual love itself may be high and holy too, it is to be like the love of Christ for His Church. It is a love which nothing can overcome. "Who shall

separate us from the love of Christ?", writes the Apostle, "shall tribulation or anguish or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril or sword? . . . For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." [1] It is a love like that, akin to that, though still far away, that can turn marriage into the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony and give force to the declaration that "Those whom God hath joined together let not man put asunder."

[1] Romans viii.

CHAPTER VIII

HOLY UNCTION

THE Biblical basis for the Sacrament of Holy Unction is found in the fifth chapter of the Epistle of St. James where we read "Is any among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: and the prayer of faith shall save him that is sick, and the Lord shall raise him up: and if he have committed sins it shall be forgiven him." And we also read that during our Lord's lifetime, he sent out the twelve "and they cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them." [1]

Our Lord's own ministry of healing was an important part of His work, and that this work of spiritual healing was continued after His ascension by His followers is evi-

[1] Mark vi, 13.

denced in the Book of Acts. It is probable that the directions given in Saint James' Epistle were followed by the early Church, though the private nature of this ministration precludes our finding many references to the use of Unction in the writings of the Fathers. Gradually, however, prescribed forms for the ritual use of oil for anointing the sick appear.

St. James seems to set forth a two-fold effect of this Sacrament, namely, a physical healing of the sick person and also certain spiritual benefits signified in the phrase about the forgiveness of sins. Possibly because of the fact that the administration of the Sacrament was not always followed by physical recovery from sickness, in Mediaeval times the Sacrament came to be looked upon rather on its spiritual side as an immediate preparation for death than as a means of physical healing. The First Prayer Book of Edward the Sixth issued in 1549 contained a form of Unction at the end of the Order for the visitation of the Sick, introduced by the following rubric:—"If the sick person desires to be anointed, then shall the Priest anoint him upon the forehead or

breast only, making the sign of the cross." The form given is as follows:— "As with this visible oil thy body outwardly is anointed; so our heavenly Father, Almighty God, grant of His infinite goodness, that thy soul inwardly may be anointed with the Holy Ghost, who is the Spirit of all strength, comfort, relief and gladness: and vouchsafe for His great mercy (if it be His blessed will) to restore unto thee thy bodily health and strength, to serve Him, and send thee release of all thy pains, troubles and diseases both in body and mind. And howsoever His goodness (by His divine and unsearchable providence) shall dispose of thee: we His unworthy ministers and servants, humbly beseech the eternal Majesty to do with thee according to the multitude of His innumerable mercies, and to pardon thee all thy sins and offences, committed by all thy bodily senses, passions, and carnal affections, who also vouchsafe mercifully to grant unto thee ghostly strength, by His Holy Spirit, to withstand and overcome all temptations and assaults of thine adversary, that in no wise he prevail against thee, but that thou mayest have perfect victory and triumph

against the devil, sin and death, through Christ our Lord: who by His death hath overcome the prince of death, and with the Father and the Holy Ghost evermore liveth and reigneth God, world without end. Amen."

This form was removed from the English Prayer Book in 1552 and has unhappily never been restored. Nor is there any form provided in our American Book.

It is evident, however, that mere omission cannot hinder any priest from employing so scriptural a rite, and, as a matter of fact, the use of Unction is now largely being revived amongst us. There are a number of Bishops in the American Church who now bless oil for this purpose, and any priest who has had any experience in using Unction can bear witness to the number of remarkable restorations to health brought about by its use. It is essential when so many are turning from the Church to health and healing cults because of the neglect by the Church of her heritage of the power of spiritual healing, that she should reclaim her neglected treasures and restore the use of the Sacrament of Holy Unction.

Holy Unction is not a charm and should not be used for every minor ailment, but it ought to be employed in every case of serious illness. Generally it should be preceded by sacramental Confession and Absolution and by the reception of Holy Communion. Unhappily too many of our people neglect to notify their priests when they are ill, and a strange superstition has gained ground that the coming of the priest to the bedside of a sick person may be a harbinger of death. A more general use of the other Sacraments together with Holy Unction by the sick would soon do away with this superstition, and would make the priest appear, as indeed he is, a bringer of joy, pardon and life.

So we conclude this very imperfect survey of the value and place of the Sacraments in the life of the Christian. They touch, or ought to touch our lives at every point, bringing to tired bodies and souls the quickening streams of grace which flow from the Heart of God. We find indeed that the Holy Sacraments, like prayer, are the means whereby we are "bound by gold chains about the feet of God." They remind us that Jesus,

Whom we worship, still works among his people, as He worked among them during the time of His earthly life. The Christian Sacraments are, to the believer, the very Touch of Christ Himself.

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